DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 295 CE 038 134

AUTHOR	Eggert, John D.
TITLE	Concerns in Establishing and Maintaining a Community Based Adult Literacy Project.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jan 84
NOTE	28p.; Paper presented at the National Adult Literacy Conference (Washington, DC, January 19-20, 1984). For other conference papers, see CE 038 126-139.
PUB TYPE	Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adult Reading Programs; *Community Programs; Coordination; Educational Change; Educational Cooperation; Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; Educational Planning; Educational Strategies; Linking Agents; *Literacy Education; Needs Assessment; Organizational Change; Program Administration; *Program Design; Program Development; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS	*Community Based Education; *National Adult Literacy Project

ABSTRACT

In developing a community-based adult literacy program, program planners need to consider who the program will serve, which strategies will best serve the target population of the program, and exactly how much stability and change are to be encouraged in the program. Once the planners of a community-based adult literacy program have answered these questions, they must determine the educational strategies, management procedures, and program linkages that will be most beneficial to the program's success. In doing this, the planners must consider their options carefully and must realize their need to make informed and definite commitments to their target audience. When deciding on an appropriate balance between change and stability within an emerging adult literacy program, planners must remain aware of the fact that while maintaining stability is a crucial aspect of the management of an organization, particularly in emerging organizations that depend upon credibility among their supporters and constituents for survival, programs that are unresponsive to their environment will not be effective and will eventually lose credibility among these same constituents and sponsors. Finally, the various individuals involved in an organization must balance their particular needs and preferences with those of other persons and with the needs of the organization as a whole. (MN)

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NIE-83-P-0111
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ED240295

Concerns In Establishing and Maintaining A Community Based Adult Literacy Project

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Much has already been learned by community-based volunteers about establishing and maintaining adult literacy programs. The literature on the "do's and don'ts" of such operations is fairly extensive and already accessible through existing organizations which specialize in assisting the growth and development of such programs, to which I refer the reader.[1,2,3] Furthermore, we have found that for every rule or strategy that we would be tempted to endorse, there quickly appears one or more situations in which that rule would be inappropriate. In fact, the struggle one faces in developing a community-based literacy program, whether as a single tutor, as an initiator of a local effort, as the coordinator of a state-wide enterprise or as a director of a national literacy organization, is the struggle of recognizing and responding to the individuality of each new person, group or community while at the same time advocating policies and procedures based on one's knowledge and experience in different but similiar situations. This unavoidable tension between the needs of an individual and the goals of a group or organization intending to serve that individual provides the focus of this paper as we consider some key concerns in the establishment and

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maintainance of a community based adult literacy project.

In this paper, the term "Community Based" refers to groups or organizations which have evolved through the efforts of members of a community in response to their community's needs. This definition includes community organizations affiliated with national organizations such as Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) and Laubach Literacy Action (LLA), as well as the hundreds of individual programs which have evolved with no support or technical assistance from sources outside of their immediate community. Although the author's perspective is from the head of a large national organization of community based programs, it is hoped that the issues raised and the solutions proposed are applicable to community based programs in general.

The term "literacy" is used in this paper to mean a variety of skills and attitudes associated with reading, including mathematics, writing, speaking and others. However, for the sake of clarity, the discussions of literacy in this paper frequently refer to reading, and not to the other related skills. This is not to suggest that literacy involves the skill of reading alone.

This paper will discuss three general areas of concerns which need to be addressed by any local, state or national group attempting to deal with the adult literacy problem through volunteer action. These are 1) Determining who should be served,

2) Deciding on the strategies to be used to serve them, and 3) Determining the degree of stability and change to be encouraged within the program.

Determining Who Should Be Served

Many beginning a volunteer adult literacy program would consider this a non-issue, on the assumption that they are ready and willing to serve "All adults who cannot read." Furthermore, given limited resources, decisions to attend to the needs of one person or group amount to decisions to withold services from others, an implicit decision often difficult to acknowledge. In practice, the issue often is not even addressed, the matter being decided in terms of whoever happens to be recruited first. Nevertheless, the concern of whom to serve must be addressed in any adult literacy program, if only to make unspoken assumptions explicit, so that decisions can be made deliberately rather than by default. The goal of this section of the paper is to help clarify the nature of the decision of whom to serve, and to show its relationship to other organizational decisions.

The question of whom to serve is a two-sided one, in that it can't be divorced from the question "What needs should we serve?" It can be phrased "Given a commitment to teach people to read, on which group of persons should we concentrate?" It can also be phrased, "Given a commitment to a group of persons, which

of their needs should we serve?" The two sides of the question present both philosophical and practical dilemmas to a volunteer literacy organization: Should we focus on the need to read, or on the needs of people who can't read?

....Philosophical and Practical dilemmas

The philosophical dilemma relates to the rationale for teaching reading. While some would argue that learning to read is a good thing in and of itself, as any learning is its own justification, most of those involved in the literacy movement would suggest that learning to read is a stepping stone tse sort of personal liberation--a better job, a sense of self worth, political empowerment, personal freedom, to name of few frequently cited goals. If reading is not regarded as an end in itself, individuals and organizations involved in the literacy movement might ask themselves "Why focus on literacy?" Why not job training, or political empowerment, or social action, or motivation, or value clarification or some other liberating knowledge? If the ultimate goal is liberation, the question also needs to be asked "Why focus on those persons who can't read?" Why not all who are disenfranchised or otherwise unfree? Does it make sense to select persons to serve on the basis of whether or not they can read when the real goal is liberation?

The practical side of this philosophical dilemma is encountered

by a volunteer literacy organization when it begins to worry about the allocation of its limited resources--time, money, expertise, community support, political backing, and the like. The organization which tries to be all things to all people soon finds it is doing nothing for everyone, or everything for no one. Many functions of an organization require some level of critical mass of resources to be succesful, and attempting to attend to too many concerns will spread the resources so thin that nothing will work. For instance, public relations, fund development and recruitment efforts work best when the organization can project a clearly defined image of itself. Too broad of a focus risks watering down the organization's public image to the point that it excites no one. Likewise, research and development efforts are apt to yield ineffective strategies and materials if too many commitments are made to too many goals. Volunteer tutors as well as their students are more likely to falter if they aren't encouraged to make specific commitments to specific objectives.

...Informed Commitment

Thus, individuals and organizations involved in literacy need to make commitments to assure the most efficient use of their limited resources. But to what or whom does one commit? A commitment to a specific need, such as to learn to read, may.

detract from other related and possibly more important needs. A holistic commitment to human needs in general risks an inefficient dispersion of resources. So to whom does an organization commit? All persons within a community? All persons who need to read? All who desire to be free? Again, the tension between the risks of irrelevancy due to narrowness on the one hand, and ineffectiveness due to breadth on the other, is a tension which any individual or organization dealing with literacy must address. There are no right choices to recommend. Rather, the recommendation is to be aware of the choices and their implications before making a commitment to them and, once that commitment is made, to capitalize on the benefits of a more clearly defined self and public image.

This recommendation is more easily made than implemented. One reason is that it seems to imply that the decision of who to serve and what needs should be met is made at a single point in time by relatively few decision makers. In fact, the decision needs to be made over and over, particularily in the early stages of the program. It needs to be re-evaluated as new human and other resources are drawn into the program, and as new options present themselves.

Individual tutors and students frequently meet this problem on a one-to-one basis. It is virtually impossible to engage in a one-to-one reading tutorial without non-reading needs quickly

becoming evident. A parent wants to talk about disciplining his child, a worker needs to understand how to deal with her employer, another obviously needs to grow in self confidence. When this happens, both learner and tutor have to confront a variety of decisions: Do they have the time to devote to these other needs? Does the tutor have the appropriate knowledge and skills to help? Is it reasonable to put aside dealing with the need to read for the sake of solving these other problems? In practice, these decisions are made fairly easily by the two parties involved.

The decisions become more complex and difficult as more people become involved in the decision-makiong process. For instance, one important point in an organization's growth is in the initial recruitment and selection of board members and volunteer staff by the founder or founding committee. Such persons must be selected to provide the human resources necessary to support the initial vision of what the organization is to be, they must also provide the diversity and breadth necessary to challenge that initial vision. As potential students, lawyers, adult educators, homemakers, fund developers and other typical board members interact, the complexity of the decision of whom to serve and which needs to attend to becomes obvious. As each brings his or her personal resources to the task, the organization shapes itself around those resources, extending itself deeper where expertise and interest exist, shrinking back where there is

none. If board and staff are committed to parenting, the organization will likely begin to develop responses for the previously mentioned student-tutor need. If not, the two are likely to be on their own. The same is true for other potential interests such as math skill development, employment, or community empowerment. Specific learner populations, whether defined racially, economically, culturally or geographically, will also be given more or less attention according to the inclinations of the initially selected board and staff members.

Thus, it is important to recognize that the board and staff selection and development process is itself a decision-making process, resulting in commitments to particular groups of persons and particular needs. As the group evolves, a consensus begins to emerge. Those that cannot fit in with the consensus tend to fall away, or opt to play the important gadfly role. This consensus reflects the organization's initial commitment. The choice of the players, at this stage, will dictate to a large extent who will be served, and which of their needs will be attended to.

Many other seemingly innocuous decisions may also strongly influence who is served and which needs are attended to. Consider the impact of the location and even decor of an office. Free space in a church basement will attract a different group of volunteers and students and will provide close support for a

different set of non-reading needs than will a spare room in a high school, a corner of a community center, a donated store-front or space in the public library. The style of recruitment posters, who answers the phone and how, and who endorses the program, will each have an impact on who is served and how. The challenge is to be aware of the nature of these impacts when human and other resources are solicited, to be prepared to adjust the course of the organization to take advantages of resources as they become available, and to be prepared to turn down resources if they will take the organization in an unwanted direction.

While this discussion of needs has been in the context of local organizations, it should be pointed out that state and national organizations face similar tensions and choices. Focusing scarce resources on the problems common to the majority of members risks overlooking those of an important minority within the organization as well as many others outside of it. Attempting to attend to everyone's needs risks inefficiency, burnout and bankruptcy. The answer lies in the acknowledgement of the responsibility of individual members to make the organization their own, and in the development of an organization flexible enough to allow individuals to use it for their own purposes. More will be said about this in a later section of this paper.

Determining Strategies

Given that an emergent community-based adult literacy project has identified the persons it intends to serve, as well as the needs to be addressed by the program, a new set of decisions presents itself: How shall these needs be dealt with? This section discusses the problem of selecting and developing strategies in terms of learner-tutor interactions, organizational structures and linkages with other organizations.

Any paper on educational strategies should begin with the warning that strategies have historically been the red herrings of education, i.e., there is a tendency to identify with and argue about the technologies associated with a given educational philosophy rather than with the heart of the matter, the educational philosophy itself. This is because the techniques associated with a given approach or organization are usually more visible, more memorable, and more clearly articulated than the philosphies upon which they are based. People have a tendency to become committed to techniques because of their concreteness. It's hard to feel secure with an abstract philosophy. A specific set of procedures or tools can make even the novice feel confident. A minute of reflection on the various technological easy answers which have come and gone in the field of education over the past couple of decades will convince the reader this is so.

The previous paragraph is not meant to denigrate the development of specific techniques to deal with educational problems. Rather, it is meant to encourage the initiators of adult literacy programs to scratch beyond the procedural surface of the various approaches available in order to understand the philosophies behind them. More often than not, the educational philosophy operational in a given tutor-learner situation reflects more the inclinations of the two persons than the techniques they are using or the organizations to which they belong. National organizations such as LVA and LLA can develop their philosophies and promote their respective approaches but, volunteers in the field are often heard to say, one would have trouble identifying the organization with which a tutor was affiliated by observing one in action, particularily if the tutor had had the opportunity to develop his or her own style with two or three students.

.....Instructional Strategies

The matter of selecting an instructional approach poses some philosophical and practical dilemmas. On the one hand, the beauty of volunteerism and of community based education is that solutions emerge from the grass roots, from those most closely involved with the problem. Thus, one could argue, specific techniques should not be advocated by a local organization, and

particularily not by a national one. People should be allowed to determine for themselves what works and what doesn't work, what is approrpiate for them in their situation. On the other hand, the beauty of an organization is that the experiences of many can be captured and distilled for the use of all. Why should thousands of wheels be reinvented thousands of times by thousands of volunteers if some workable blue prints can be shared through an organization.

The answers are not clear, of course, and must be saught on a case-by-case basis. The experiences of others are relevant only to the extent that they are similar to a given situation. A tutor must continually assess the needs of the student to determine whether or not one of the standard approaches is appropriate or if a new one must be invented. A community adult literacy organization, particularily a new one, must thoroughly consider the needs of its student and tutor consitutents before it commits itself to a given approach or a given set of materials. Philosophically, a commitment to one or another approach may not be necessary. Practically speaking, however, the logistics of tutor training, program management and quality control more or less dictate that some core approach be adopted.

....Management Strategies

Another set of strategies which need to be selected by a new

volunteer literacy program are the strategies used to manage the program. Specific management functions that must be dealt with include tutor recruitment and training, learner recruitment, tutor-learner matching, tutor supervision, instructional resource management, financial management, public relations, fund development, planning and evaluation. Local literacy programs differ substantially in terms of how these various functions are carried out, even among affiliates of the national volunteer organizations. This is because the manner in which functions are combined and carried out is in a large part dependent on the expertise of the board and staff members selected to be responsible for them. (An important exception is the tutor training function which tends to be more tightly controlled by the national organizations as a primary means of quality control). Workshops and technical assistance offered by the major volunteer literacy organizations, local voluntary action centers and the like provide sufficient assistance to get novices started on their way, but a new organization is well advised to recruite as much expertise in these areas for their initial board and staff positions. As in the case of the instructional strategies, management approaches based on the experience of other organizations are relevant if the contexts of the organizations are sufficiently similar to make the transfer valid.

.....Linkage Strategies

Some of the most important strategy decisions an emerging adult literacy program faces concerns linkages with other organizations, both inside and outside of the community. Potential linkages within the community are as diverse as the communities themselves. Consider parent-school organizations, block or neighborhood watch groups, local denominational or ecumenical religious groups, locally owned businesses, social service outreach centers with close ties to the community, senior citizen groups, food distribution centers, and tenants' organizations as possible examples.

Linkages with groups within the immediate community are essential for a number of reasons. Any community development effort has the obligation to inform and be informed about other activities in the community to avoid duplication, to minimize competetion, to contribute to a common sense of community, to maximize the strength of the community, and, in general, to help assure the efficient use of community resources. In addition, an important advantage of volunteer programs is their ability to draw upon the diverse human and other resources within a community. This strengthens the program both through the addition of the resources as well as through the increase in community ownership and commitment to the program. Finally, a program intending to serve a community which does not trouble

itself to understand and become integrated with that community will probably not survive and, if it does, will probably be irrelevant to a large segment of the community it purports to serve.

Linkages to persons and organizations outside of the immediate community are also important as a means of drawing financial and political support, technical assistance and other resources into the program. Municipal and state political coalitions, public and private social service agencies, foundations, community chests, religeous organizations all have the potential for providing resources to a program, and some have the potential for working against it. It is important to identify opportunities for such linkages, to carefully weigh the costs and benefits of each to an emerging program, and to consciously nurture those which will be of greatest use.

Particularily important linkages are to geographically distant programs in other communities which have had experience dealing with similar problems. Contact with such programs can be made through national organizations such as LVA, LLA, or the Association for Community Based Education.State and regional organizations with interests in literacy also may be able to assist in linkages with similar programs.

Change, Stability and Consensus Within a Program

Implicit in the above discussion is a concern for the appropriate balance between change and stability within an emerging adult literacy program. The growth of individuals as well as organizations requires change. The efficient use of resources to achieve a goal, whether it be an individual or an organizational goal, requires a stable view of what that goal is and how it can be achieved. The longevity and success of a volunteer literacy program depends to a large degree on the maintenance of an appropriate balance between change and stability.

...The Importance of Stability

An organization is formed to coordinate the resources of a number of individuals to achieve a common goal. Success of the group effort requires agreement about what the goal is and how to get there. It also requires that this agreement be maintained long enough for the accumulated efforts of the individual members to have an effect. Frequent changes in goals or methods wastes resources through false starts and through people working in opposing directions. Unstable goals and strategies can quickly lead to internal strife as individuals observe the efforts of others to be counter to their own.

Stability of goals and procedures is important from the

individual learner's point of view. Taking the important step of asking for help often involves great psychological risks, such as the risk of failing again or the risk of being disappointed by someone claiming to want to help, but unable to do so. Enrolling in an adult literacy program is an act of faith requiring a high degree of confidence in whomever is offering to help. A sense that tutors and program personnel have a clear and consistent idea of what they are doing supports this confidence. A consistent approach to learning about reading allows a new student to predict what will happen from lesson to lesson. This, in turn, provides the learner with a sense of control, making it easier for the learner to contribute to the process him/herself. Furthermore, a clearly stated and consistent set of goals allows a learner to observe progress as it is made, also leading to increased confidence and a sense of control.

Stability is important to tutors, staff and board members within the organization. As various committees plan and carry out their functions, it is important for each to have a clear idea of what the others are doing. This helps assure that the efforts of one are supportive of and consistent with those of the others. This is true for practical reasons,e.g., to assure that limited resources are not wasted. It is also true for psychological reasons. Observing others carrying out plans according to the group's expectations encourages individual members to do likewise. As in the learning situation, success

inspires self-confidence, rewards commitment and begets more success. A group's observation that it can achieve agreed upon objectives gives the group a sense of worth and power. Stability in strategies helps a group to work together.

Finally, stability is important in terms of linkages with other groups or organizations. Others need to know what the commitments of a group are and how it intends to achieve them so that they can decide to endorse the group, coordinate their efforts, or provide direct assistance. The very existence of clearly stated objectives and plans tend to inspire confidence in potential funders and other supporters. Likewise, if an organization can document that planned strategies were carried out and anticipated goals were achieved, outsiders will be much more willing to believe that it can be done again.

Thus, maintaining stability is a crucial aspect to the management of an organization, particularily in an emerging organization which depends upon credability among its supporters and constituents for survival. Learners, staff, volunteers, board members, and funders and other outsiders need to feel they are part of something concrete and real, and that their time, commitment and other resources will not be wasted on contradictory goals or counterproductive practices. They need to know that the organization is under the control of its members, not the whims of chance and happenstance.

...The Importance of Change

An organization which does not change with the times dies with the times. This is obviously true for an organization which has been around for a long time, where goals and procedures created in one decade become outmoded and inappropriate for the needs of its consituents of the next decade. But it is also true for an emerging organization, where the initial assumptions about its goals and the strategies for achieveing them must change quickly as more becomes known about the problem and the resources available to deal with it.

This is particularily true for a volunteer community based organization in which the resources tend to be both diverse and unpredictable. As new persons are drawn into a fledgling program, they bring new perspectives and new solutions. As other resources are discovered, sometimes significant changes need to be made in the program to take advantage of them. It is important during the early stages of development that a program's initial developers don't become so enamored with their beginning assumptions that they are unable to respond to new ideas and opportunities.

Change is necessary in the tutor-learner relationship. It is crucial that the individuality of the learner be recognized, respected and responded to. The assumptions of the tutor will be

different from those of the learner, if only because one knows how to read and the other doesn't. But tutor-learner differences are often much more substantial due to differences in economic, educational, social, and cultural backgrounds. One of the first tasks of the tutor is to assess these differences and make allowances for them. An important assets of the one-to-one setting is the ability of the tutor to change assumptions, goals and strategies in response to the individual learner.

The ability and willingness to change is important in establishing cooperative relationships with other groups and organizations. Too often potential partnerships are lost or they turn into antagonistic relationships because of differences in goals and strategies. Probably as often as not the differences or more apparent than real and reflect preferences or habit more than substantial philosophical differences. An organization must be prepared to adjust its rhetoric and procedures if such an adjustment will result in a more efficient use of a community's resources and does not violate the essential values of the program.

The support of change is critical to the management of a volunteer adult literacy project. A program that is unresponsive to its environment will not be effective and will lose credibility among its constituents and its sponsors. When program participants recognize that their input has an effect,

they will become more personally invested in and committed to the program because it will be a part of them. A program that is prepared to change will be more able to capitalize on the opportunities which the whims of chance or the good will of its supporters present to it.

...The Importance of a Vital consensus

Maintaining the appropriate balance between change and stability is the key to growth. This is true with respect to the growth and development of individuals, it is also true for organizations. However, there is an additional dynamic in the case of organizational growth and development. This is the dynamic of consensus within the organization. This requires that the various individuals balance their particular needs and preferences, including needs and preferences for change and stability, with those of the other persons and with the needs of the organization as a whole.

Organizations normally use a variety of strategies to develop and maintain consensus. Ceremonies and rituals serve to focus attention on the expressed values of the organization. Informal stories or myths about the organizations past and those who were part of it help preserve a sense of unity, of belonging to something greater than oneself. Administratively and legally, consensus is maintained through corporate by-laws, policy

statements and procedures manuals.

The goal of consensus does not mean that everyone must agree upon everything, but rather that the balance of agreement and dissention is one which will result in growth toward common goals. While too little agreement results in uncoordinated and thus ineffective dispersion of human energy and other resources, too much agreement is also dangerous. Blind reliance on tradition and procedures of the past doom an organization to an uncreative future, a victim of a changing world. A vital, or growth oriented, consensus requires individual and organizational change within the constraints of cooperation.

The key to creating and maintaining a vital consensus is communication within the organization. It is critical that all persons involved are constantly aware of the opinions of others, as well as the sense of the group. It is also essential that each participant in the organization feels free to express his or her opinion, is given a means to do so, and knows the opinion will be respected. A free flow of information is necessary for a vital consensus.

Informal Communication and Consensus. Communication occurs within an organization through informal and formal processes. Each are important. Informal processes include conversations between tutors and students, casual telephone calls among participants, visiting over coffee after formal meetings, and the

like. This sort of communication is important because it allows persons to express their personal hopes fears and frustrations with those they trust most, without worry of recrimination. It allows for the testing of uncertain ideas before they are presented to the group as a whole. It is this sort of interpersonal communication that builds the strong bonds between individual members and thus establishes and maintains the life and the spirit of an organization.

It is also this sort of communication which can result in cliques and schisms within an organization, which can create in-groups and out-groups, or which can lead to distrust and fractionation. The key to assuring that informal communication within an organization supports a vital consensus rather than leads to self destruction is openness. Individuals must be encouraged to air their concerns to the group as a whole. This can be done through a number of ways including suggestion boxes, an open door policy of leaders within the organization, the holding of town meetings, the frequent requesting of feedback on specific aspects of the program, and the sponsorship of social activities which allow members to mingle and converse.

Formal Communication and Consensus. Formal communication processes include policy and procedures manuals, audio-visual materials for tutor training, newsletters, minutes of meetings, posters, news releases, public relations materials, reports by

committees and board members, staff briefings, and other planned and recorded interactions. This sort of communication is important because it presents a relatively clear statement of what the consensus is, or at least what someone feels it should be. Formal statements tend to focus attention on key issues to be confronted, discussed, endorsed, rejected or altered by the group. They can build upon and feed back into the informal communication process, clarifying issues that may have been ambiguous, rectifying misunderstandings, and disposing of irrelevant conflicts. Formal statements may be voted upon by the group, formalizing its commitment to an old or a new consensus.

Formal communications can also inhibit the establishment of a vital consensus. This occurs when participants see the formal statement as an expression of the power of a limited group such as founders, staff or board members. It can also occur if the creation of a formal statement leads people to view the consensus as terminal and no longer a part of an evolutionary process. The key to the success of formal communication in building a vital consensus is its integration with the informal communication process. Group members should be informed of the process by which the informal sense of the group is converted into a formal statement, and should be allowed to be a part of that creative activity.

Integrating Formal and Informal Communications. The integration

of the informal and formal communication processes can be supported in a number of ways. Comments from suggestion boxes, brainstorming sessions, and even informal conversations can be presented formally in a questionnaire or in a tentative report in a meeting or newsletter for the purposes of soliciting feedback and encouraging discussion. This information can be used to create another version, the process being repeated until a consensus is reached. Another approach is the establishment of special committees composed of representatives of various perspectives in the organization with the task of interviewing other members and developing a tentative version of the consensus on a specific problem. It is also important to keep the language and style of formal statements as close to the language and style of an organization's constituents as possible to avoid unnecessary perceptions of distance.

The most important means of assuring the integration of the formal and the informal communication processes, and thus the development of a vital consensus within an organization, is the development of a spirit of mutual trust and respect. This spirit must be fostered with regard to the individuals themselves, and to the organization representing their collective beliefs, values and commitments.

Conclusion

This paper discussed three concerns in establishing a community based adult literacy program: determining who should be served, determining the strategies with which they should be served, and maintaining the balance between stability and change. Several themes can be seen to be run throughout the discussion--The importance of recognizing options, the need to make commitments, and the importance of remaining aware of the necessary tension between the needs of the individual and the goals of the organization.

An organization must carefully consider its options. There are more people to serve, more needs to address, more strategies to use and more opportunities for change than an organization can possibly deal with. Yet, it is important that the multiplicity of options be searched for, identified and understood. Given the enormous dimensions of the problem of adult illiteracy, the temptation is to select whichever option presents itself first. The most obvious option may indeed be the most important one, but it may not be. It is important to consider the breadth of the issues facing an organization before deciding where to commit the organization's resources.

An organization needs to make commitments. Options imply choice, choice implies commitment. These commitments are often difficult to make, but they must be made, given limited resources. Neither an organization nor its members can be all

things to all people. The temptation is strong to avoid commitments, to allow the decisions to occur by default--who to serve, the strategies to use, when and how much to change. However, an organization's human and other resources are too precious to delegate to the whims of chance. Options must be considered explicitely, and commitments made with deliberate awareness, to assure that the organization is serving the needs of its constituents as best it can.

Finally, the necessary tension between the needs of the individual and the goals of the organization must be recognized. While it is sometimes pleasant to hear an organization espouse its interest in serving all needs of all people, it simply can't be done. When an organization selects options and makes commitments, it necessarily disregards some needs of some persons. This fact must be addressed and understood, not as a failing of the organization, but as a virtue. For it is only by assessing the costs and benefits of its options that an organization can wisely allocate the human and other resources entrusted to it.